



US Army Corps of Engineers®



BRIDGING THE GAP

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About Bridging the Gap

"Bridging the Gap" is an electronic publication produced biannually by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information about the partnerships and volunteer programs around the country. For more information, or to submit stories for future editions, contact your PAC representative.

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National MOU: Corps Foundation



In June 2023, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Corps Foundation signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to foster contributions and partnerships that support environmental and recreation projects at USACE operated lakes and waterways. USACE and the Corps Foundation have worked together for more than a decade to nurture partnerships and contributions for the Natural Resources Management (NRM) program and wish to maintain and expand these efforts. This MOU provides a framework for continued collaboration related to outreach and education, technical and financial assistance, support of cooperating associations and volunteers, and advocacy for the enhancement of the recreation and environmental stewardship programs at USACE Civil Works projects.

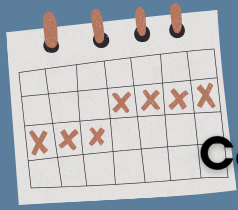
A few examples of past partnering efforts between the Corps Foundation and USACE include support of the water safety program through the "Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns" campaign, support of the Innovations team, donation of volunteer and partnership awards and coins, the Toolkit for Developing a Cooperating Association, advocacy for new legislative authorities, fundraising, and grant assistance. ■



Photo above: Corps Foundation board members: Sam Wagner, Kent Dunlap, Greg Miller, Avis Kennedy, Nancy Rogers, Sue Clevestine, Rachel Garren.



Visit the Corps Foundation at corpsfoundation.org



Mark Your Calendars



Rosie Lemons, Natural Resources Specialist, St. Louis District

The St. Louis District at Lake Shelbyville hosted the NRM Partnerships PROSPECT course in July 2023. The PAC, along with the Lake Shelbyville team, utilized successful partnerships at the project level to showcase successful collaboration, communication, and commitment. These success stories will serve as models to USACE students across the nation as they strive to maximize partnering at their home projects.

- **September 20:** Excellence in Partnerships (EIP)/Volunteer of the Year Award webinar, 1:00 pm EST
- **September 23:** National Public Lands Day
- **September 25:** Noxious Weed Cooperative Agreements webinar, 1:00 pm EST
- **September 26:** Corps Foundation webinar, 1:00 pm EST
- **September 28:** Qlik Partnerships/Volunteer App webinar, 11:30 am EST
- **September 29:** FY23 CWBI-OPS Partnerships/Volunteer Module webinar, 12:00 pm EST
- **September 30:** FY24 Handshake Applications due
- **October 1 - November 15:** FY23 CWBI-OPS Partnerships/Volunteer Data Entry
- **October 4:** Backcountry Hunters and Anglers MOU webinar, 1:00 pm EST
- **October 16:** FY23 CWBI-OPS Partnerships/Volunteer Module webinar, 2:00 pm EST
- **November 1:** EIP/Volunteer of the Year Award webinar, 11:00 am EST
- **November 2:** FY23 CWBI-OPS Partnerships/Volunteer Module webinar, 3:00 pm EST
- **December 1:** EIP/Volunteer of the Year Award Applications due



Photo above: Partnerships in NRM PROSPECT class group photo.

A portion of the class consisted of a field trip where members of partnering organizations met with the class. Representatives from the Youth Ambassadors, General Dacey Trail, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Lake Shelbyville Fish Habitat Alliance, Central Illinois Sportsmen for Outdoor Accessibility (CISOA), and the Central Illinois Mountain Bicycling Association were able to collaborate and share ideas with the students and the PAC team. ■



Photo above: A representative from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers speaks to the class about the Opossum Creek Archery Complex.

Photo above: Bob Kerns with the CISOA shares the knowledge and wisdom he has gained over the years through partnering with USACE.

Have you attended the PROSPECT Partnerships in NRM class yet? If not, sign up for one of our classes:

- ✓ FY24 Session 1: Mark Twain Lake, Monroe City, MO. June 24 - 27, 2024
- ✓ FY24 Session 2: Falls Lake, Wake Forest, NC. September 16 - 19, 2024

Please visit
<https://ulc.usace.army.mil/CrsScheduleNewFY.aspx>
 to enroll

SCA Cooperative Agreement: Start thinking about 2024!

Jennifer Linde, Natural Resources Specialist, Fort Worth District

If you've attended one of the PROSPECT courses for NRM Partnerships or have been involved in partnerships at your project, you may recall that one of the four types of cooperative agreements available to the NRM community of practice is "Education and Training," which is most often used for youth conservation services agreements. It may be a little intimidating to consider a partnership that requires a grants officer's approval, but the NRM Partnership program has done some of the work for you!

If you've considered having an intern from a youth conservation organization work at your project, but don't know where to start, then using the current nationwide Cooperative Agreement for Youth Conservation Services between USACE and the Student Conservation Association (SCA), administered out of the Fort Worth District, may be something to consider. The nationwide agreement was initiated in 2016 and has been used by projects across USACE. The phrase "SCA interns" may bring to mind "water safety education." Interns do quite a bit of water safety education and outreach, but interns and work crews can accomplish a wide variety of work for USACE including GIS work, cultural resources surveys and curation, boundary line clearing and marking, maintenance, wildlife surveys and habitat enhancement, aquatic and invasive species monitoring, and more.

Getting a work order signed by a grants officer for an SCA intern can take from 3-4 months depending on workload, so it's important to start planning early, especially if you are considering summer interns for the 2024 recreation season. SCA has a nationwide applicant pool, but students often begin looking for summer positions early in the calendar year.



Photos: An SCA intern working at the welcome desk of Libby Dam.

An SCA intern monitoring a purple martin nest box.

The first step in getting an intern is to determine what work you need the intern to do, when you want the intern at your project, and for how long; interns can work a period of performance from 12 weeks to 52 weeks. You will also need to determine allowances for lodging, transportation/daily commuting, and a weekly subsistence stipend. These often depend on local conditions; SCA recommends a minimum of \$250 a week for the subsistence stipend. You will need to decide whether you want to recruit locally or utilize SCA's nationwide recruiting pool. Once you've given those items some consideration, it's time to contact me to discuss specifics about your proposed work order and the process for transferring funds to Fort Worth. You will also need to send me a Statement of Objectives (SOO); I have plenty of examples that I can send you to steal shamelessly from, if needed.

Once the work order is signed by the Fort Worth grants officer, projects will work directly with SCA to recruit and onboard interns for their project. Having an SCA intern at your project can be a great way to accomplish some needed work or expand public outreach efforts. It can also be a great recruiting tool for that next generation of USACE NRM employees; many current USACE employees started out as SCA interns!



Blue Marsh Love Your Lake Event

Alexis Albu, Park Ranger, Blue Marsh, Philadelphia District

Blue Marsh Lake hosted the 3rd Annual "Love Your Lake" event for Lake Appreciation Month with local partners from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, PA Lake Management Society, Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards, Berks Nature, Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Association, Aqua Om Paddle, and Mount Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department.

On Friday July 21st, Blue Marsh Rangers and partners educated the public on several aspects of environmental education and outdoor recreation safety including watershed education, water safety, harmful algal blooms, aquatic invasive species prevention, native wildlife around the project, and paddle board demos. The event concluded with an evening/moonlight paddle.

During the event multiple bilingual speakers were present to enable further positive outreach and education for local underserved community members who attended. In total, 175-200 people attended this event. ■



Photo above: Getting ready for the moonlight paddle at Blue Marsh Lake.

CWBI-OPS: Partnerships and Volunteer Module

Taylor Baughn, Supervisory Park Ranger, Lake Mendocino, San Francisco District

As a part of the NRM program, it is likely you have heard of the new data-entry platform being released called CWBI-OPS (Civil Works Business Intelligence - Operations). Unique to its predecessors, CWBI intends to serve all business lines within the agency in the most efficient, cost-effective manner available. So what does this mean for the operations branch, related to the Partnerships and Volunteer Programs? It means that this year we are going to be learning a new system together. New systems can be intimidating, but rest assured the PAC is here to help with the transition. Heather Burke (HQ), Jennifer Linde (SWD), and Taylor Baughn (SPD) will be hosting three webinars this Fall specific to the Partnerships and Volunteers Module (dates and times listed below).

Our field staff play an important role as the USACE story narrators. Whether you are a seasoned volunteer coordinator or a student intern, good data tells a good story and that is where CWBI and the field intersect. The agency and the public depend on people like you to paint a 'mural-by-numbers' so local work can gain visibility from different vantage points. Depicting accurate, timely, and relevant data allows our colleagues, partners, stakeholders, leaders, and the public to learn about and celebrate our mutual accomplishments. ■

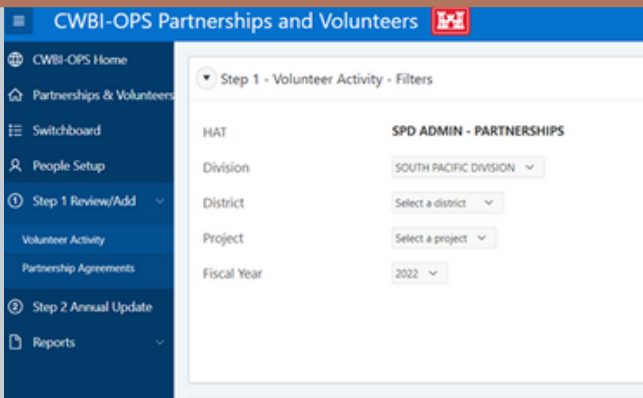
Important Dates and Information for the Partnerships and Volunteers:

Dates

Opening: Oct. 1st
Closing: Nov. 15th

Webinars

Sept. 29th at 9:00 am PST
Oct. 16th at 10:00 am PST
Nov. 2nd at 12:00 am PST



Jamison Davis, Park Ranger, Rathbun Lake, Kansas City District

Carrisa Hatfield and her husband, Jim, have been campground volunteers for four years at Rathbun Lake. After completing their duties on Friday evening of Memorial Day weekend, they were settling in to enjoy camping time with friends and family. Shortly thereafter they heard an emergency call broadcast over the county aid frequency regarding a health issue at neighboring Buck Creek Marina. With no responsibility other than good conscience, Carrisa rushed over to see if help was needed.

Carrisa found a large crowd of people standing in a circle around a fallen male patron at the Marina's café. The on-lookers seemed to be frozen in place and in doubt of what to do. Pushing to the front, she checked and found no pulse. Immediately she began CPR while instructing others on how to be helpful. She asked that someone call and inform the 911 center of the serious nature and ask for Life-Flight evacuation. Soon thereafter she initiated AED shock to the patient, re-establishing a heartbeat. Roughly 20 minutes went by before local EMS and ambulance teams arrived. During this time, Carrisa alternated compressions with others who had some training.



Medical staff praised her efforts, stating that the patient was mere seconds from unrecoverable effects. Mistakenly, the on-lookers thought the person over-indulged while celebrating the Memorial Day holiday. He had actually suffered a massive heart attack at only 37 years of age.

We often take for granted the extra benefits our volunteers provide, usually providing necessary but somewhat routine and mundane tasks. This is only one of countless examples of what they provide that quietly goes unaccounted for. My greatest respect and congratulations to Carrisa for being the person who didn't look the other way. ■

Partnerships and Volunteers Qlik Apps

Francis Ferrell, Chief Ranger, Jordan Lake, Wilmington District



The Institute for Water Resources and Partnership Advisory Committee are excited to announce the launch of new, interactive, web-based tools that visualize NRM partnership and volunteer data. The new pages are housed in the [National Initiatives Viewer Tool](#) and provide users a flexible way to explore volunteer and partnership data that can be manipulated to show information from the national level all the way down to the project level and across fiscal years.

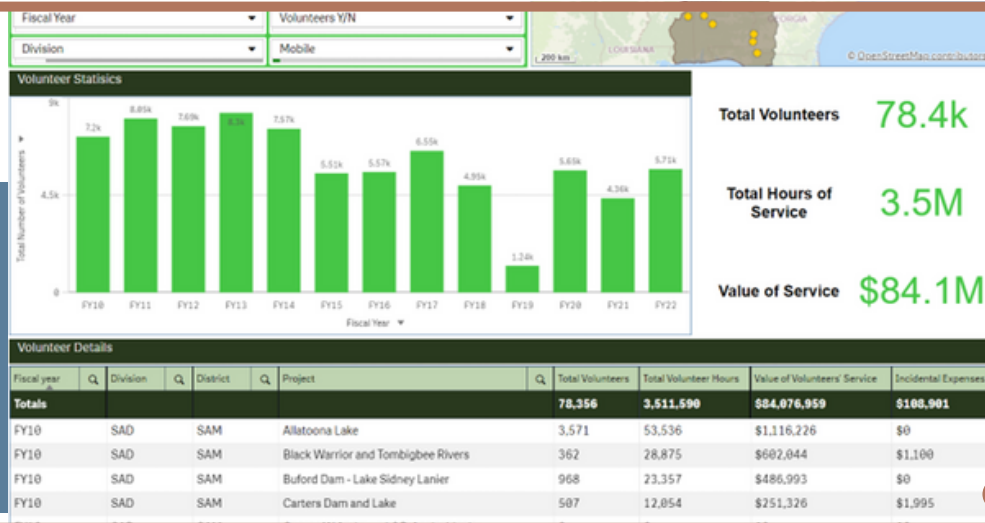
Data is pulled into the tool from CWBI-OPS year end reporting modules, but also contains data collected in past years from NRM Assessment and OMBIL. Being able to easily pull up USACE partnership and volunteer data has wide-ranging benefits, from helping tell the USACE NRM story, to building internal support for our programs, to preparing and supporting our budget requests.

The USACE partnerships page and volunteers page are valuable resources for anyone who is interested in understanding how partners and volunteers are working to improve natural resource management. The tools can be used to identify trends in activity, assess the effectiveness of the partnership and volunteer programs, and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

The tools provide a variety of features that make it easy to visualize and understand partnership and volunteer data. Users can filter data by location, year, type of partnership, volunteer hours and value, and other criteria. As you filter data to your needs, the map viewer, charts, and detail spreadsheet update on the fly. Then you can export a chart for use in a fact sheet, or download the spreadsheet and open in Excel for additional manipulation and analysis.

A division level MSC may want to look at their projects that have been awarded Handshake funding in the past three years to see what types of applications were awarded and encourage Lake Managers to replicate those successful strategies. An NRM Specialist with partnership responsibilities may want to look at other projects in their district to see who they are partnering with to develop leads for developing new relationships. All of this and more is possible using the new tools.

These web-based applications are designed to be user-friendly and easy to learn through exploration, but there is also a user guide available and an upcoming webinar to help you get started. You are also welcome to reach out to your PAC representative for assistance on using the applications. ■



Meet Your PAC Team Members

Heather Burke
HQUSACE

Francis Ferrell - Chair
SAD (Falls Lake)

Scott Sunderland
NAD (Blue Marsh Lake)

Mike McCoy
LRD (Huntington District Office)

Phil Manhart
MVD (Lake Shelbyville)

Taylor Baughn
SPD (Lake Mendocino)

Keith Hyde
NWD (Lucky Peak Lake)

Jennifer Linde
SWD (Fort Worth District Office)

NRM Gateway Spotlight: Economy Act Page

Visit the Economy Act page to learn more about the authority that allows us to partner with other Federal agencies and pay them for providing goods and services to meet our NRM program needs. On this page you will find links to policies and procedures, examples of existing Economy Act agreements, templates, FAQs, and success stories.

To get started using the USACE Partnerships page and USACE Volunteers page, please visit the National Initiatives Viewer Tool by visiting:

- 1 NRM Gateway
- 2 Environmental Stewardship
- 3 Stewardship Tools
- 4 National Initiatives Viewer Tool